

Union Calendar No. 385

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 2748

[Report No. 116-481]

To establish an integrated national approach to respond to ongoing and expected effects of extreme weather and climate change by protecting, managing, and conserving the fish, wildlife, and plants of the United States, and to maximize Government efficiency and reduce costs, in cooperation with State, local, and Tribal Governments and other entities, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 15, 2019

Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. POCAN, Mr. COHEN, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. MENG, and Mr. McGOVERN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

Additional sponsors: Mr. ROUDA, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. TONKO, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CASE, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. CASTEN of Illinois

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

Reported with an amendment; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on May 15, 2019]

A BILL

To establish an integrated national approach to respond to ongoing and expected effects of extreme weather and climate change by protecting, managing, and conserving the fish, wildlife, and plants of the United States, and to maximize Government efficiency and reduce costs, in cooperation with State, local, and Tribal Governments and other entities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 *This Act may be cited as the “Safeguarding America’s*
5 *Future and Environment Act” or the “SAFE Act”.*

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS, PURPOSES, AND POLICY.**

7 *(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—*

8 *(1) healthy, diverse, and productive communities*
9 *of fish, wildlife, and plants provide significant bene-*
10 *fits to the people and economy of the United States,*
11 *including—*

12 *(A) abundant clean water supplies;*

13 *(B) flood and coastal storm protection;*

14 *(C) clean air;*

15 *(D) a source of food, fiber, medicines, and*
16 *pollination of the crops and other plants of the*
17 *United States;*

18 *(E) outdoor recreation, which is a source of*
19 *jobs and economic stimulus;*

20 *(F) hunting and fishing opportunities and*
21 *support for subsistence communities;*

22 *(G) opportunities for scientific research and*
23 *education;*

24 *(H) world-class tourism destinations that*
25 *support local economies; and*

1 (I) sequestration and storage of carbon to
2 help mitigate changes to the global climate sys-
3 tem;

4 (2) the United States Geological Survey, Na-
5 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Na-
6 tional Aeronautics and Space Administration, and
7 other agencies within the United States Global
8 Change Research Program have observed that the fish,
9 wildlife, and plants of the United States are facing
10 increasing risks from changing patterns of extreme
11 weather and climate, including—

- 12 (A) severe droughts and heatwaves;
- 13 (B) severe storms and floods;
- 14 (C) frequent and severe wildfires;
- 15 (D) more frequent and severe outbreaks of
16 forest pests and invasive species;
- 17 (E) flooding and erosion of coastal areas
18 due to rising sea levels;
- 19 (F) melting glaciers and sea ice;
- 20 (G) thawing permafrost;
- 21 (H) shifting distributions of fish, wildlife,
22 and plant populations;
- 23 (I) disruptive shifts in the timing of fish,
24 wildlife, and plant natural history cycles, such
25 as blooming, breeding, and seasonal migrations;

(K) altered patterns of rain, snow, runoff, and streamflow; and

(L) habitat loss, degradation, fragmentation, and movement; and

7 (3) the Federal Government should provide lead-
8 ership in preparing for and responding to the effects
9 described in paragraph (2) to ensure that present and
10 future generations continue to receive the benefits of
11 the abundant and diverse fish, wildlife, and plant re-
12 sources of the United States.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purpose of this Act is to establish an integrated national approach—

15 (1) to respond to ongoing and expected effects of
16 extreme weather and climate change by protecting,
17 managing, and conserving the fish, wildlife, and
18 plants of the United States; and

19 (2) to maximize Government efficiency and re-
20 duce costs, in cooperation with State, local, and Trib-
21 al Governments and other entities.

22 (c) NATIONAL FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS CLIMATE
23 CHANGE ADAPTATION POLICY.—It is the policy of the Fed-
24 eral Government, in cooperation with State and local gov-
25 ernments, Indian Tribes, and other interested stakeholders

1 to evaluate and reduce the increased risks and
2 vulnerabilities associated with climate change and extreme
3 weather events, and to use all practicable means to protect,
4 manage, and conserve healthy, diverse, and productive fish,
5 wildlife, and plant populations.

6 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

7 *In this Act:*

8 (1) **ADAPTATION.**—The term “adaptation”
9 means—

10 (A) the process of adjustment to actual or
11 expected climate and the effects of climate
12 change; and

13 (B) with respect to fish, wildlife, and
14 plants, protection, management, and conserva-
15 tion efforts designed to maintain or enhance the
16 ability of fish, wildlife, and plants to withstand,
17 adjust to, or recover from the effects of extreme
18 weather and climate change (including, where
19 applicable, ocean acidification, drought, flooding,
20 and wildfire).

21 (2) **CENTER.**—The term “Center” means the Na-
22 tional Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center
23 established under section 6(a)(1).

24 (3) **COMMITTEE.**—The term “Committee” means
25 the Advisory Committee on Climate Change and Nat-

1 ural Resource Sciences established under section
2 6(b)(1).

3 (4) ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES.—The term “eco-
4 logical processes” means biological, chemical, or phys-
5 ical interaction between the biotic and abiotic compo-
6 nents of an ecosystem, including—

- 7 (A) decomposition;
8 (B) disease epizootiology;
9 (C) disturbance regimes, such as fire and
10 flooding;
11 (D) gene flow;
12 (E) hydrological cycling;
13 (F) larval dispersal and settlement;
14 (G) nutrient cycling;
15 (H) pollination;
16 (I) predator-prey relationships; and
17 (J) soil formation.

18 (5) HABITAT.—The term “habitat” means the
19 physical, chemical, and biological properties that fish,
20 wildlife, or plants use for growth, reproduction, sur-
21 vival, food, water, or cover (whether on land, in
22 water, or in an area or region).

23 (6) HABITAT CONNECTIVITY.—The term “habitat
24 connectivity” means areas that facilitate terrestrial,

1 marine, estuarine, and freshwater fish, wildlife, or
2 plant movement that is necessary—

3 (A) for migration, gene flow, or dispersal;

4 or

5 (B) to respond to the ongoing and expected
6 effects of climate change (including, where appli-
7 cable, ocean acidification, drought, flooding, and
8 wildfire).

9 (7) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
10 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the In-
11 dian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
12 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304(e)).

13 (8) NATIONAL STRATEGY.—The term “National
14 Strategy” means the National Fish, Wildlife, and
15 Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy released March
16 26, 2013.

17 (9) RESILIENCE; RESILIENT.—The terms “resil-
18 ience” and “resilient” mean the ability to anticipate,
19 prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and
20 withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from dis-
21 ruptions.

22 (10) STATE.—The term “State” means—

23 (A) a State of the United States;

24 (B) the District of Columbia;

25 (C) American Samoa;

6 (11) WORKING GROUP.—The term “Working
7 Group” means the National Fish, Wildlife, and
8 Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy Joint Implemen-
9 tation Working Group established under section 4(a).

10 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS CLIMATE**
11 **ADAPTATION STRATEGY JOINT IMPLEMENTA-**
12 **TION WORKING GROUP.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the President shall establish a National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy Joint Implementation Working Group composed of the heads of Federal and State agencies or departments with jurisdiction over fish, wildlife, and plant resources of the United States, and Tribal representatives, as follows:

21 (1) The Administrator of the Environmental
22 Protection Agency.

23 (2) *The Administrator of the Federal Emergency*
24 *Management Agency.*

1 (3) *The Administrator of the National Oceanic
2 and Atmospheric Administration.*

3 (4) *The Chair of the Council on Environmental
4 Quality.*

5 (5) *The Chief of Engineers.*

6 (6) *The Chief of the Forest Service.*

7 (7) *The Commissioner of Reclamation.*

8 (8) *The Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.*

9 (9) *The Director of the Bureau of Land Management.*

11 (10) *The Director of the National Park Service.*

12 (11) *The Director of the United States Fish and
13 Wildlife Service.*

14 (12) *The Director of the United States Geological
15 Survey.*

16 (13) *The Secretary of Agriculture.*

17 (14) *The Secretary of Defense.*

18 (15) *State representatives from each regional association of State fish and wildlife agencies.*

19 (16) *Not less than 2 Tribal representatives.*

21 (b) *DUTIES.—The Working Group shall serve as a forum for interagency consultation on, and the coordination of, the development and implementation of the National Strategy.*

25 (c) *CO-CHAIRS.—There shall be 4 co-chairs, of whom—*

- 1 (1) two shall be representatives of the Federal
2 Government;
3 (2) one shall be a representative of a State; and
4 (3) one shall be a Tribal representative.

5 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS CLIMATE
6 ADAPTATION STRATEGY.**

7 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Working Group shall adopt the
8 National Strategy to protect, manage, and conserve fish,
9 wildlife, and plants to maintain the inherent resilience and
10 adaptability of fish, wildlife, and plants to withstand the
11 ongoing and expected effects of extreme weather and climate
12 change.

13 (b) *REVIEW AND REVISION.*—Not later than 1 year
14 after each release of the assessment required under section
15 106 of the Global Change Research Act of 1990 (15 U.S.C.
16 2936), the Working Group shall—

17 (1) use sound science to review and revise the
18 National Strategy to incorporate—

19 (A) new information regarding the ongoing
20 and expected effects of climate change on fish,
21 wildlife, and plants; and

22 (B) advances in the development of fish,
23 wildlife, and plant adaptation strategies; and
24 (2) in carrying out paragraph (1), provide pub-
25 lic notice and opportunity for comment.

- 1 (c) CONTENTS.—A revised National Strategy shall—
2 (1) assess the vulnerability of fish, wildlife, and
3 plants to climate change, including short-term, me-
4 dium-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts;
5 (2) describe current observation and monitoring
6 activities at the Federal, State, Tribal, and local lev-
7 els relating to the ongoing and expected effects of cli-
8 mate change on fish, wildlife, and plants;
9 (3) identify and prioritize research and data
10 needs;
11 (4) identify fish, wildlife, and plants likely to
12 have the greatest need for protection, restoration, and
13 conservation due to the ongoing and expanding effects
14 of extreme weather and climate change;
15 (5) include specific protocols for integrating fish,
16 wildlife, and plant adaptation strategies and activi-
17 ties into the conservation and management of natural
18 resources by Federal agencies to ensure consistency
19 across agency jurisdictions;
20 (6) identify opportunities for maintaining, re-
21 storing, or enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants to re-
22 duce the risks of extreme weather and climate change
23 on other vulnerable sectors of society;
24 (7) identify Federal policies and actions that
25 may reduce resilience and increase the vulnerability

1 *of fish, wildlife, and plants to extreme weather and*
2 *climate change;*

3 *(8) include specific actions that Federal agencies*
4 *shall take to protect, conserve, and manage fish, wild-*
5 *life, and plants to maintain the inherent resilience*
6 *and adaptability of fish, wildlife, and plants to with-*
7 *stand, adjust to, or recover from the ongoing and ex-*
8 *pected effects of climate change, including a timeline*
9 *to implement those actions;*

10 *(9) include specific mechanisms for ensuring*
11 *communication and coordination—*

12 *(A) among Federal agencies; and*
13 *(B) between Federal agencies and State*
14 *agencies, territories of the United States, Indian*
15 *Tribes, private landowners, conservation organi-*
16 *zations, and other countries that share jurisdic-*
17 *tion over fish, wildlife, and plants with the*
18 *United States;*

19 *(10) include specific actions to develop and im-*
20 *plement coordinated fish, wildlife, and plants inven-*
21 *tory and monitoring protocols through interagency*
22 *coordination and collaboration with States and local*
23 *governments, Indian Tribes, and private organiza-*
24 *tions; and*

(11) include procedures for guiding the development of detailed strategy implementation plans required under section 7.

4 (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—

5 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—Consistent with other laws
6 and Federal trust responsibilities concerning Indian
7 land or rights of Indians under treaties with the
8 United States, each Federal agency shall integrate the
9 elements of the National Strategy that relate to con-
10 servation, management, and protection of fish, wild-
11 life, and plants into agency plans, environmental re-
12 views, and programs.

13 (2) PUBLIC REPORT.—The Working Group shall,
14 on a biannual basis, between revisions to the National
15 Strategy, make available to the public a report docu-
16 menting any actions implementing the Strategy.

22 SEC. 6. *FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS ADAPTATION*
23 SCIENCE AND INFORMATION.

24 (a) NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE AND WILDLIFE
25 SCIENCE CENTER—

1 (1) *AUTHORIZATION.*—*The Secretary of the Interior,*
2 *in collaboration with the States, Indian Tribes,*
3 *and other partner organizations, shall establish a National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center.*

5 (2) *DUTIES OF CENTER.*—*The Center shall assess*
6 *and develop scientific information, tools, strategies,*
7 *and techniques to support the Working Group, Federal*
8 *and State agencies, Tribes, regionally based*
9 *science and conservation centers, regional coordinating*
10 *entities, and other interested parties in addressing the effects of extreme weather and climate*
11 *change on fish, wildlife, and plants.*

13 (3) *GENERAL AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS, GRANTS, AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.*—
14 *The Secretary may enter into contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements with State agencies, State cooperative extension services, institutions of higher education, other research or educational institutions and organizations, Tribal organizations, Federal and private agencies and organizations, individuals, and any other contractor or recipient, to further the duties under paragraph (2) without regard to—*

23 (A) *any requirements for competition;*
24 (B) *section 6101 of title 41, United States Code; or*

1 (C) subsections (a) and (b) of section 3324
2 of title 31, United States Code.

3 (b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND
4 NATURAL RESOURCE SCIENCES.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after
6 the date of enactment of this Act, and pursuant to the
7 Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.), the
8 Secretary of the Interior shall establish an Advisory
9 Committee on Climate Change and Natural Resource
10 Sciences.

11 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Committee shall be com-
12 prised of 25 members who—

13 (A) represent—

14 (i) Federal agencies;
15 (ii) State, local, and Tribal Govern-
16 ments;
17 (iii) nongovernmental organizations;
18 (iv) academic institutions; and
19 (v) the private sector; and

20 (B) have expertise in—

21 (i) biology (including fish, wildlife,
22 plant, aquatic, coastal, and marine biol-
23 ogy);

24 (ii) ecology;

(iii) climate change (including, where applicable, ocean acidification, drought, flooding, and wildfire); and

4 (iv) other relevant scientific disciplines.
5

6 (3) *CHAIR*.—The Secretary of the Interior shall
7 appoint a Committee Chair from among the members
8 of the Committee.

(C) review and comment on each revised National Strategy before that National Strategy is finalized.

1 (5) *COLLABORATION.*—The Committee shall col-
2 laborate with climate change and fish, wildlife, and
3 plant research entities in other Federal agencies and
4 departments.

5 (6) *AVAILABILITY TO PUBLIC.*—The advice and
6 recommendations of the Committee shall be made
7 available to the public.

8 **SEC. 7. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.**

9 (a) *DEVELOPMENT.*—Not later than 1 year after the
10 date of enactment of this Act and not later than 1 year
11 after the date of each revision of the National Strategy, the
12 Working Group shall—

13 (1) complete a strategy implementation plan;
14 (2) provide opportunities for public review and
15 comment on the plan; and
16 (3) submit the plan to the President for ap-
17 proval.

18 (b) *REQUIREMENTS.*—The strategy implementation
19 plan shall—

20 (1) identify and prioritize specific conservation
21 and management strategies and actions that address
22 the ongoing and expected effects of extreme weather
23 and climate change on fish, wildlife, and plants, in-
24 cluding—

1 (A) protection, management, and conserva-
2 tion of terrestrial, marine, estuarine, and fresh-
3 water habitats and ecosystems;

4 (B) establishment of terrestrial, marine, es-
5 tuarine, and freshwater habitat connectivity cor-
6 ridors;

7 (C) restoration and conservation of ecologi-
8 cal processes;

9 (D) protection of a broad diversity of spe-
10 cies of fish, wildlife, and plant populations; and

11 (E) protection of fish, wildlife, and plant
12 health, recognizing that climate can alter the dis-
13 tribution and ecology of parasites, pathogens,
14 and vectors;

15 (2) establish methods—

16 (A) to assess the effectiveness of strategies
17 and conservation actions implemented by the
18 agencies to protect, manage, and conserve fish,
19 wildlife, and plants; and

20 (B) to update those strategies and actions to
21 respond to new information and changing condi-
22 tions;

23 (3) describe current and proposed mechanisms to
24 enhance cooperation and coordination of fish, wildlife,
25 and plant adaptation efforts with other Federal agen-

1 *cies, State and local governments, Indian Tribes, and*
2 *nongovernmental stakeholders;*

3 *(4) include written guidance to resource man-*
4 *agers; and*

5 *(5) identify and assess data and information*
6 *gaps necessary to develop fish, wildlife, and plant ad-*
7 *aptation plans and strategies.*

8 *(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—*

9 *(1) IN GENERAL.—On approval by the President,*
10 *each Federal agency shall, consistent with existing*
11 *authority, implement the strategy implementation*
12 *plan under subsection (a)(1) through existing and*
13 *new plans, policies, programs, activities, and actions.*

14 *(2) CONSIDERATION OF EFFECTS.—To the max-*
15 *imum extent practicable and consistent with existing*
16 *authority, fish, wildlife, and plant conservation and*
17 *management decisions made by each Federal agency*
18 *shall consider and promote resilience to the ongoing*
19 *and expected effects of extreme weather and climate*
20 *change.*

21 *(d) REVISION AND REVIEW.—Not later than 1 year*
22 *after the National Strategy is revised under section 5(b),*
23 *the Working Group shall review and revise the strategy im-*
24 *plementation plan under subsection (a)(1) to incorporate*
25 *the best available science, including advice and information*

1 pursuant to section 6 and other information, regarding the
2 ongoing and expected effects of climate change on fish, wild-
3 life, and plants.

4 **SEC. 8. STATE FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS ADAPTATION**

5 **PLANS.**

6 (a) *REQUIREMENT.*—To be eligible to receive funds
7 pursuant to subsection (d), not later than 1 year after the
8 date of enactment of this Act and not later than 1 year
9 after the date of each revision of the National Strategy, each
10 State shall prepare and submit to the Secretary of the Inter-
11 rior and the Secretary of Commerce, a State fish, wildlife,
12 and plant adaptation plan detailing current and future ef-
13 forts of the State to address the ongoing and expected effects
14 of climate change on fish, wildlife, and plants and coastal
15 areas within the jurisdiction of the State.

16 (b) *REVIEW OR APPROVAL.*—The Secretary of the Inter-
17 rior and the Secretary of Commerce shall—

18 (1) review each State adaptation plan; and
19 (2) approve a State adaptation plan if the
20 plan—

21 (A) meets the requirements of subsection (c);
22 and

23 (B) is consistent with the National Strat-
24 egy.

25 (c) *CONTENTS.*—A State adaptation plan shall—

1 (1) meet the requirements described in section
2 7(b), except that the requirements of that section re-
3 lating to marine habitats or ecosystems shall not
4 apply to a State in which those habitats or ecosystems
5 do not exist;

6 (2) include the adaptation provisions of any
7 State comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy (or
8 State wildlife action plan) that has been—

9 (A) submitted to the Director of the United
10 States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

11 (B) approved, or is pending approval, by
12 the Director of the United States Fish and Wild-
13 life Service;

14 (3) include the adaptation provisions of a state-
15 wide assessment and strategy for forest resources re-
16 quired under section 2A of the Cooperative Forestry
17 Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2101a) that has
18 been—

19 (A) submitted to the Secretary of Agri-
20 culture; and

21 (B) approved, or is pending approval, by
22 the Secretary of Agriculture; and

23 (4) in the case of a State with coastal areas, in-
24 clude the adaptation provisions of a Coastal Zone

1 *Management Plan or a Coastal and Estuarine Land*
2 *Conservation Program Plan that has been—*

3 *(A) submitted to the Administrator of the*
4 *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-*
5 *tion; and*

6 *(B) approved, or is pending approval, by*
7 *the Administrator of the National Oceanic and*
8 *Atmospheric Administration.*

9 *(d) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS TO STATES.—Any funds*
10 *made available pursuant to this Act shall be—*

11 *(1) used to carry out activities in accordance*
12 *with adaptation plans approved under this section;*
13 *and*

14 *(2) made available through—*

15 *(A) the State and Tribal wildlife grant pro-*
16 *gram under title I of division F of the Consoli-*
17 *dated Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law*
18 *110–161; 121 Stat. 2103); and*

19 *(B)(i) the grant program under section 306*
20 *of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16*
21 *U.S.C. 1455);*

22 *(ii) the Coastal and Estuarine Land Con-*
23 *servation Program established under title II of*
24 *the Department of Commerce and Related Agen-*

1 *cies Appropriations Act, 2002 (16 U.S.C.*
2 *1456d); and*

3 *(iii) programs established under the Cooperative*
4 *Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C.*
5 *2101 et seq.).*

6 *(e) PUBLIC INPUT.—In developing an adaptation*
7 *plan, a State shall solicit and consider input from the public*
8 *and independent scientists.*

9 *(f) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANS.—A State ad-*
10 *aptation plan shall, where appropriate, integrate the goals*
11 *and measures set forth in other climate adaptation, hazard*
12 *mitigation, and fish, wildlife, and plant conservation strat-*
13 *egies and plans.*

14 *(g) UPDATES.—Each State adaptation plan shall be*
15 *updated at least every 4 years.*

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